Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

a circle and all the time sang and beat time with their hands, the Chamar accompanying them with his drum. Several of the women took part in the digging of the earth and each girl was allowed but one blow with the pick. The earth thus displaced was gathered up with the mattock and put into the baskets. It was estimated that about thirty pounds were actually brought. The group then returned to the courtyard as slowly as they went but in the reverse order, with the lamp at the rear. The earth was then thrown in the centre of a small raised platform called the *mandil*, though occasionally the *mandil* is made later on from the earth brought in at this time. After the baskets were emptied the women brought water in small earthenware vessels and each threw water on the pile of earth until it was thoroughly soaked. The women then went to another part of the courtyard where each had left a bit of wheat which they brought from their homes when they first came. This was piled at another point and as each presented her wheat the mother dipped a bit of sweet oil from her household oil-jug and gave it to the other women. After this a small cone of cowdung, which is worshipped by unmarried girls, was set up on the *mandil*. See Figure 19.

This earth should be sufficient to make either five or seven *chulhas* and they should be prepared sometime during that night. In Deosori they said that it would be done in the morning, and as it is done only by the women of the household it is likely that it was done after the people had departed. The party broke up at this point and from twenty to twenty-five women and young girls departed. This happened at 9 P.M. Occasionally there is a feast following the *mangarmati*, but there was none in this particular case.

The next day the *chulhas* constructed from this earth should be ready for the preparation of the *lawa*, a mixture of parched paddy and millet, which is considered an indispensable part of the wedding preparations. During the time of its preparation there is joking and fooling. Before they can start to parch the rice one of the male members brings a young chicken and thrusts it into the lighted *chulha*. If the chicken does not catch fire and die (that is, if the *chulha* is not hot enough) it becomes the property of the male relative, but if it dies the women take it and make it into a curry. If the chicken catches fire no effort is made to save it. The parching of rice may now begin and this should be initiated by the man who brought the chicken. The same *chulha* which was used for the burning of the chicken should not be used for the subsequent parching. As the man commences his work some of his female relatives approach him and do all they can to disturb his work and irritate him. They may throw mud at him, abuse

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

584 him verbally (give *gali*), take all kinds of liberties with him and try
252 their best to make him lose his temper. He is supposed to take no
[578] notice of this but to remain calmly at his work. After the *lawa* is prepared (the man does not prepare all that is required) it is put into
[532] a new *ghara* decorated with pictures representing females. Sometimes other articles are also put into the *ghara* –uncooked rice, bits of *supari* nut, *haldi* and two-pice coins. When prepared at the bride-groom's house the *lawa* is kept to be taken with the boy's party on their trip to the girl's village for the *sadi* and is there mixed with the *lawa* prepared in the girl's house for use at the time of the wedding. The preparation of the *lawa*, which is made a day or two before the group
[574 leaves for the wedding, is made the occasion for the reconciliation of
626 estranged relatives within the village and the consequent restoration
578] of friendship. This reconciliation may also be extended to any member of the *kurhi* with whom there have been unhappy relations.

584 (*b*) *Marriage Booth: Marhwa.* In the meantime there has been far more to do at the girl's house where the actual wedding is to take
349 place, for the wedding booth (*marhwa* or *mandap*) must be constructed there. This is usually set up in the courtyard immediately in front of the girl's house. In this booth the essentials of the marriage ceremony are performed and the sacred pole is fixed at its centre. Male relatives of the bridegroom help to build it, but women must have nothing to do with its construction. Before the men who come to work can actually start operations the bridegroom must have his body
[302 rubbed with *til* oil mixed with *haldi*. The anointing should be done
602] by his sister or another close female relative and he should then be
543] dressed in clothes which have been dipped in *haldi* water. The construction of the *marhwa* may now begin.

584 The *marhwa* is constructed of prescribed kinds of wood. Its size varies, but is usually about eight feet square and six to seven feet
349 high. Nine poles are used in its construction, including the central
824 post, called the *magrohan*, which however does not reach up to the roof. *Saleh* (*Boswellia serrata*) is the most favoured kind of wood and if procurable is preferred, both for the framework of the booth and for the sacred pole at its centre. The eight remaining poles are arranged so that there are three on a side. Text figure 21 will make this clear.[1] If *saleh* wood is not available, *gular* (*Ficus glomerata*), *sal* (*Sheora robusta*), *char* (*Buchanania latifola*) or even bamboo are permissible. The central post, however, must be of *saleh* wood and they search far and wide until they have found it. The leaves of the banana plant are tied to each of the eight poles and over the top. The

[1] [ow p.86.-Awal 7R]

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Usually the girl's party pays the costs of all the ceremonies in her village, while the boy's party pays at his village. Possibly, though we were never actually able to determine the proportion, the costs in the end are about the same for both parties. The boy's father has to pay out more in actual cash, but has to bear a lesser expense in the home in connection with the preparations. In reply to our enquiries, we were given various estimates, but probably no one knows exactly just what the costs are. Sometimes there may have been an exaggeration, but in the light of their economic level the costs are staggering. The cost of a regular marriage is hardly ever less than thirty rupees per family and it ranges from this anywhere up to one hundred rupees per family. In the latter case the people must have originally greater resources and feel that they must do things more lavishly. As the Kol almost never has any money saved or in hand, most money for such expenses must be borrowed; and with the economic level as it is the repayment of such loans is practically impossible. The debtor becomes a virtual slave to the *malguzar* from whom he borrows the money.

The marriages described above bear many marks of, and resemblances to, Hindu marriages. It is believed that in the main the above is a fairly consistent account of the Kol types of alliances. Enquiry from other places show certain variations in practice and order. There are still many details to be filled in, and there are many variant practices yet to be noted and compiled. The process is a complicated one, and without doubt there is considerable variation between village and village in the matter of details.

POLYGYNY. [If the husband can afford the added expense it is not uncommon for him to have two wives.] In a case where there are two wives, it is usually discovered that the second "wife" has not been married with all the ceremonies as was the first, and that in reality she is just "kept." This arrangement however is considered legal and binding and a feast to the local group usually atones for the irregularity of the procedure. In our survey of Barela we found that there were three households in which more than one wife was found. In one of these instances a quarrel was then in progress between the wives and twice within the period of two weeks the aggrieved wife had run away and the man had to go out and search for her. In Panagar one Kol was found to have five wives, one of whom boasted to us that it was a sign of strength on the part of the husband. But a man standing by slyly remarked: "But look at their clothes and their condition." Kols expect their wives to work and so they are often looked upon as

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca.1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

428 578 623 692

Should a dispute arise over the division of the property the matter must be settled by the *panch*. They will probably distribute it as equally as possible among the sons. Should this not be satisfactory to all concerned the sons have the right to appeal to the law courts of the land and have the matter settled there. Among Kols this is seldom, if ever, done.

421 562 541

The female members of the family do not enjoy equal rights with the males. A girl, when married, loses her membership in her family, and becomes a member of the new home. When she goes to live with her husband she takes nothing with her apart from her clothes and some personal adornments. It was noted by Russell and Hiralal that:

171 428

> Succession among the Mundas passes to sons only. Failing there, the property goes to the father or brother if any..... Daughters get no share in the inheritance and are allotted among the sons just like livestock. Thus if a man dies leaving three sons and three daughters and thirty head of cattle, on a division each son would get ten head of cattle and one sister; but should there be only one sister, they wait until she marries and divide the bride price.[1]

This quotation, from their article on the Kols, does not apply to the specific Kol tribe, but nevertheless we found instances of this tendency.

428 422 562

There is a difference of opinion as to the disposition of the property if there are no sons and only girls in the family. In many places it was affirmed that property could pass to the daughters if there were no sons. This was always her own property and nothing could alienate it from her, not even her marriage. When such a girl is married she takes her property with her and such property is considered her own and does not become a portion of her husband's wealth. If she should ever leave his home due either to divorce or quarrel she still remains its owner. Keeping it thus in her name and under her control is a protection to her in case of need. At her death, such property, if still existing, is supposed to revert to her father's family, his brothers or their heirs. When a wife dies her clothes are disposed of as noted in Chapter VII. Her metal jewellery is kept and may be worn by a new wife or passed on to the sons.

[586]

[1] Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III, p. 515.

li Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

764 nor measure it to see whether a spirit has gotten within and caused the body to swell. Other groups, such as the Chamars,[1] are said to do this. In Rewa it was reported that they should not wait till daylight, but should make immediate arrangements even though the work has [184] to be done at night. They said that if a man died about 9 p.m., they would have the corpse buried by 3 a.m. This, though, seems to be the exception and not the rule; other groups have denied this, saying that no burial ever occurs at night.

[443] TRANSPORTATION OF THE CORPSE. The body is transported to the burial or cremation grounds on the *tatari* as noted above. The corpse is always carried by men. Among the Oraons it is said that the custom once was that the women always carried the corpse.[2] Four men at a time act as pall bearers. The men are frequently changed so that as many as possible may assist. Even a man's [578] "enemies" should come and help and if such a person does there will be no further enmity between him and the rest of the family. This will also appease the spirit of the deceased. The body is usually carried so that the feet go first. There is a division of opinion on this matter though, as some Kols claim that the head should always be kept in the [823] direction of the Ganges; hence in cases where the graveyard happens to be in the north of the village the head is carried forward. That the feet go first is generally true in other groups, in order, it is said, that the spirit of the deceased may not find its way back. But the [775] Kol has no objection to the spirit's return, and in fact expects it back; actually food is put out near the house for it. If the body is set down for a time the head should point north and the feet south.

On the way to the *masan* or *marghat* (burial place) or the *ghat* or *chita* (burning place) there should be no chanting nor singing nor music of any kind. Lamentation and weeping is all that is in order. The party goes in two groups, first the men with the bier, and, following a short distance behind, the women and the children. The women bring the water for washing the body as well as the oil and turmeric for anointing. As the party proceeds it is customary to drop some mustard seeds along the way, and *laddu* balls made with sweetened *lai* (puffed [787] rice) are also dropped at intervals. On the way back they try to see [775] if these have been picked up, and form an opinion as to whether the [776] omens are good or bad. Some say that if the spirit of the deceased returns he will pick them up. The *rai* seeds will keep the evil spirits

1 Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, pp. 100—101.
2 Roy, S. C., *Oraon Religion and Customs*, p. 173.

li Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

539 *Kya jano maya sukhi ke khanewale.*
Garewa bharae apa ke liye—garewa ka ghatana,
Kya jano tumari ke pinewale.
Biriya banaewa apa ke liya—biriya ruchana,
Kya jano mayapalla ke khanewale.
Seja bichhaonwa apa ke liya—sejiya sona,
Kya jano gudri ke sonewale.

O dwellers in jungle, what do you know of singing and music?
I have cooked for you,—but how poor you make it out, for you have dry food always.
I have water ready for you,—but alas, will it please you? You who drink water from gourds?
Pan is ready too,—but you who use the leaves of the forest, can you enjoy this tender treat?
A bed is ready for you,—but tell me true:
How will you ever rest on such, O sleepers on rugs!

535 DANCES. Dancing is found in connection with all happy occasions: births, weddings, feasts and festivals, but among the [462 Kols it is only the women who dance. The men play and sing, but it is 562] universally claimed that they never dance; it is considered effeminate to do so, for eunuchs dance, and since Kols are men they should not dance. In other groups among whom the Kols live, such as the Gonds and even the outcaste groups, the men-folk dance.

There is one main type of dance among Kols called by the same name as the songs that are sung with it: the *dadra*. There are various forms of this dance, differing somewhat in rhythm and also in movement. To the casual observer they look almost the same, but to the Kol there are real differences. The *purani chal* and the [578] *shaitani* are forms of the *dadra*. The word *shaitani* is literally 'satanic' or 'devilish' and in this form the words sung are very abusive [583] and suggestive. On the occasion of such a dance with its accompanying songs, youths and maidens often elope.

[177] The famous *karma* dance of the Gonds, in which both men and women participate, is not danced by the Kols, though they know of it and have often watched it. Russell and Hiralal however, claim [114] that the Kols dance it.[1]

1 *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 517.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

159 and my parents. My father asked me: "Harlal, did you bring any money with you?" I said, "Yes, I had money, but I spent it all." He did not say any more nor scold me, but asked me to live in the house and do coolie work along with them. But I did not like this and again left Barela and began to work again in the same bungalow where I was a *panka* puller and continued to work there for a whole year at Rs. 12/-.

Fortunately a big flood washed away the railway bridge over the Nerbudda river and there was much demand for workers to re- [464] build it. I went there and got a job and the railway authorities liked my work and were pleased by my skill and I was given the work of a blacksmith where I worked happily for six years.

During this time my father also was working steadily and was able to collect some money for my marriage as I was past the marriageable age. He called me back for the marriage and I had to return, because I too was anxious to get married and had some money [465] saved up for it. But after my marriage I again left home and went back to my work on the railway, for by that time I was getting Rs. 19/- per month, which is a very good salary. I left my new wife with my parents. My father came to see me at my work, and walked the whole distance of forty miles and pleaded with me to go back to the house because they were all missing me a great deal. So I took six days leave and came back to Barela. When the people of my Kol community saw me they all began to give me advice, saying that half a *chapati* in your own home is better than a whole *chapati* in another place. So I listened to their advice and did not return to my work on the railway.

● [578] After a year at home there arose a great quarrel between my father and myself. My father began to ill treat me so that my wife and I left Barela and went to Kharara Ghat where my parent-in-laws and some other relatives were living. As there was much wood in the jungle about Kharara Ghat both of us began to cut wood and carry it to Jubbulpore to be sold there. But as time went on we became 159 very hard up for money and we asked our parents and relatives to 426 give us some money, but they absolutely refused, so we had to borrow money from a money-lender on security. We had some jewellery and ornaments, and with them as security we borrowed Rs. 100/- and with this we began to buy wood and collect it in a great heap near our village of Kharara Ghat. This we sold at a profit in Jubbulpore. In the meantime when my father thought I was well off he asked me for a loan of Rs. 25/- and as I had no cash at that time I had to refuse him saying that at present I had none. I also told him that I had borrowed money from others and had left the jewellery as security for

1: Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Koi AW37

that amount and that the money is being used in my trade of buying and selling wood. He got very angry at me for that and took away all the wood that I had, along with my bullock cart, and brought them to Barela. He not only took these things but also paid my debt at the money-lender's and took all our jewellery which I had left as security. So we became dependent upon him again, and our condition seemed helpless.

For two years both my wife and myself had a very hard time. We had no tools to work with, nor money, nor clothes, and also no heart to work anywhere. I borrowed Rs. 2/- but that amount was all spent for food. Later we took courage and again started to sell wood. We used to go out to the jungles together and I used to carry over a *maund* a day to Jubbulpore, a distance of eight miles each way. But this heavy work was too much for me and I became ill. For two more years we suffered very much. Father took away all that we had and so we were again without anything. After my health was recovered I again began to sell some wood and little by little I was able to carry greater loads to the city. By the money thus earned I was able to buy a few tools and by the third year we were again independent, and these tools are still (1937) helping me to retain my self respect and earn a living for my family.

At present I have learned to do many kinds of work: especially the work of a mason which I prefer above the others. I also do some carpentry work when it is available. I am able, when I work, to earn from eight annas to a rupee a day, and this is enough. But if there should be a long period without work we suffer.

I am still on bad terms with my father and while I am now living in Barela I am living in a separate house which I rent for eight annas a month. My sister is not yet married though she is about fourteen or fifteen years old. My first baby died when it was a month old but the next child, a son, is still living. I have only one wife. I don't want to keep two wives because they are no advantage and full of troubles.

Manbodhi: A Centenarian Kol

I belong to the Shivari family of Kols and was born in Rewa State about 100 years ago. When I was born my father was working as a serf for some farmer. When I was about 25 years old my father died, but he had left Rewa State when I was but fifteen days old. My maternal uncle brought our family to Jubbulpore where we stayed a few weeks and then started on foot to Nagpur (about 200 miles)